



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Below are frequently asked questions about the AgERT course. If your question is not among them check under the following links on the APHIS AgERT main page: [Pre-course Requirements & Recommendations](#), [Nomination Process](#), [Course Outcomes](#), or [Contact Us](#).

1. Are there any prerequisites for the training programs?

Yes. APHIS employees selected to attend the AgERT course are advised to complete the *Incident Command System Training 100*, *Incident Command System Training 200*, *Introduction to Biosecurity*, and *Introduction to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*. These courses are available to APHIS employees through AgLearn, the USDA's online learning management system. To access AgLearn and to obtain additional information on AgLearn, check under the [AgLearn](#) link.

2. Will I become certified by attending any of this training?

Yes. Provided you are also medically cleared and properly fit tested for an approved air purifying respirator, you will receive certification status as an APHIS emergency responder. You can find additional information under Nomination Process.

3. How often are these training programs offered/conducted?

AgERT is scheduled to be conducted monthly. See the AgERT main page for current training schedule information.

4. Who can attend these training programs?

You can find the disciplines on the AgERT main page under [AgERT Nominees](#).

5. Is the AgERT course a repeat of the PPE courses that were conducted in Ames, Iowa, in October 2002 and September 2003?

The PPE courses formerly held in Ames, Iowa, are not the same course as the AgERT course. The AgERT course covers virtually everything formerly covered in the Ames PPE courses and even targets the same audience (i.e., emergency responders). The key difference is that AgERT introduces the concepts and complexities associated with preparing for and responding to WMD events. AgERT

focuses on teaching APHIS employees to “think out of the box.” It engages them in emergency response activities along side responders, many of whom are traditional responders who are totally unaware of animal and plant health issues.

6. I am a Federal employee, will it cost me or my organization any money to attend?

Yes. Your travel expenses will be paid locally through your Area or Regional office. Please have your office prepare your Travel Authorization (AD 202). If traveling by air, it is recommended that you use the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport (ATL) since transportation will be provided by the Centers for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) to and from ATL.

7. Where is the CDP training facility located?

The AgERT course will be conducted at CDP's training facility in Anniston, Alabama. The training facility is located on the former Fort McClellan Army base in Anniston, Alabama, which is approximately 90 miles west of Atlanta, Georgia, and 60 miles east of Birmingham, Alabama. The third day of the course is conducted at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.

8. How do I get there?

The CDP will provide free round-trip shuttle service to and from the ATL airport, as well as all training areas and support facilities on a scheduled basis.

9. Where do I stay/sleep while attending CDP training programs?

The CDP has one-person suites that share a common bathroom.

10. How are meals provided?

Breakfast and dinner meals are provided at the dining hall in the lodging area. Lunch is provided at the CDP training complex. Please note that meals at the CDP facility can be paid by cash or check only.

11. Who do I contact for logistical purposes?

Please contact Ms. Kerri Dukes on (919) 855-7172, or by email (Kerri.A.Dukes@aphis.usda.gov).

12. Am I able to solely observe the course without participating?

Yes. Please contact Ms. Kerri Dukes on (919) 855-7172, or by email (Kerri.A.Dukes@aphis.usda.gov) if you are interested in observing the AgERT course.

13. Will retraining be required for those who take the AgERT course?

Retraining is strongly encouraged but currently not required for the AgERT course. To maintain respirator certification, however, respirator fit testing is required annually.

14. Are the APHIS employees who successfully complete the AgERT course issued any kind of PPE?

PPE is not issued at course completion primarily due to cost and maintenance concerns. However, your supervisor is responsible for ensuring you have the appropriate PPE you need to work in a potentially hazardous environment.

15. How long will my medical clearance and respirator fit test certification be good for?

The validity period for medical clearances is normally two years, but depends on the condition and health of the individual.

16. Should I bring a change of clothes to the course?

Yes. You should plan on bringing a change of clothing for each day of the course. Be sure it is comfortable to wear and suitable for expected weather conditions.